

Sample Slab Update #5 – July 2015

The newsletter for sample slab collectors

Market Notes

In early June, I visited the three-times-per-year Long Beach Expo, which is about my only opportunity to buy and sell samples in person. Jim Cauley and I made a small trade only deal that was profitable for both of us and I was happy to get one of the PCGS 2007 China Visit presidential dollar samples with the odd melted inner ring.

PCGS was giving away 2015 Shield cents in their latest holder with the QR code on the back. After offering nothing at this show for a few years, NGC resumed supplying samples at Long Beach, this time for the children's Treasure Hunt trivia game. The YN slabs were mostly 2009 – 2010 presidential dollars labeled "YN Treasure Trivia," which is the name for the similar event at each ANA World's Fair of Money, suggesting they were leftovers from prior ANA shows.

The several NGC Treasure Trivia slabs that made their way to eBay sold for surprisingly low prices, with a low of \$7 and a high of \$25. In our very thin market, even a few extra pieces can depress values temporarily. Other YN slabs also sold low in the last few weeks and some collectors got bargains.

Two eBay sellers mentioned my The Numismatist article in their listings.

An eBay seller known as rs1055 put about 50 high quality NGC and PCGS samples on eBay in the last few weeks. Unlike most hoards, this one had only the good stuff, with multiples of NGC Morgans, PCGS Liberty nickels, NGC 1982 Washington halves, and more. Despite the large number of samples, and unlike the situation for YN slabs mentioned earlier, prices stayed at typical levels. For scarce samples with broad appeal, it appears, the market can absorb a few dozen \$50 - \$120 pieces without trouble.

How Many Types of Samples Exist?

In issue 4, Sample Slab Update listed the number of samples appearing on eBay as a guide to the proportion of pieces from each grader. This time, I am sharing the number of types known for each service. That is, this table lists the number of different kinds of slabs listed in the catalog for each grader.

Grader	Types	%
NGC	179	30.8%
PCGS	128	22.0%
ICG	94	16.2%
ANACS	86	14.8%
SEGS	18	3.1%
PCI	17	2.9%
PCGS Currency	8	1.4%
PMG	8	1.4%
NTC	5	0.9%
Accugrade	3	0.5%
Blanchard	3	0.5%

Global	3	0.5%
Hallmark	3	0.5%
NGS	3	0.5%
CMC	2	0.3%
CNCS	2	0.3%
Compugrade	2	0.3%
INGS	2	0.3%
TruGrade	2	0.3%
ACCA	1	0.2%
AHCGS	1	0.2%
CGA	1	0.2%
CNCS Currency	1	0.2%
Coinland	1	0.2%
DCGS	1	0.2%
DGS	1	0.2%
ICG Currency	1	0.2%
NCGS	1	0.2%
NCI	1	0.2%
Numex	1	0.2%
SGS	1	0.2%
WBG	1	0.2%
581		100.0%

Some observations:

1. As expected the Big Two (NGC and PCGS) have the most different kinds of samples, followed by the Little Two (ICG and ANACS).
2. When I started this project, I thought that ANACS, with its many club and show slabs, would have the most types, but they ultimately ranked fourth.
3. ICG, whose samples make up less than 4% of the market by number of pieces, had 94 different types, or 16% of all known sample slab varieties. Many of these must be quite scarce. While none are expensive, some ICG types will be nearly impossible to find.
4. Thirteen grading services have only one known type of sample. Only the top six services have more than ten varieties.
5. Many more samples remain to be discovered. Although the proportions will remain roughly the same, expect the number of types to grow.

Book News – On Track

Sample Slabs is ahead of schedule and could be ready before the September 17 planned launch. The full text, now at 445 pages in 5 ½” by 8 ½”, has been complete since the last newsletter. I went through two rounds of edits, but would like to do one more to improve accuracy further. A designer is working on a book cover and I arranged a printer. The launch is still planned for September 17, but I will make the book available to SSU readers as soon as it is complete.

The book received some favorable publicity in CoinWeek and The E-Sylum (newsletter of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society), with possible upcoming mentions in COINage and Coin World.

Buying and Selling

Feel free to send buy and sell offers to include in the next newsletter. Maybe another SSU reader wants to buy your samples, or has the ones you need. No charge for the listings, of course.

I usually have some extra samples to sell, so let me know if there is anything for which you are looking. I am also interested in buying, especially from minor grading services.

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